



HRO News

Maine National Guard

COL McLaughlin
Human Resources Officer
207-430-6010

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LtCol Dawson
Deputy HR Officer
207-430-6012

MSG Bailey
Classification
207-430-6017

LTC Jordan
Employee Benefits
207-430-6016

Mrs. Varney
Employee Benefits
207-430-6020

CMSgt Guesman
Labor / Conduct Mgt
207-430-6015

SGT MacVane
Training and Development
207-430-6019

Mrs. Leet
Equal Employment
207-430-6014

CPT Sessions
Staffing Specialist
207-430-6013

Ms. Jones
Staffing Assistant
207-430-6011

MSgt Hunter
Information Systems
207-671-6021

Ms. Smith
Information Sys Assistant
207-430-6022

SSG Ronald Cohen
Program Analyst
207-430-5882

CW3 Merrill
AGR Manager
207-430-6023

SFC Richardson
AGR NCOIC
207-430-6025



Message from the HRO

Welcome to another edition of the MENG Newsletter. It is our hope that you continue to find relevant information that answers some of the questions or concerns that you may have. Please feel free to contact me if there is an article/subject that you would like to see in a future newsletter.

We've recently seen a significant change in how we conduct business in the Human Resources Office. The old way of doing business has officially changed for Technician Official Personnel Folders. The OPF's have been scanned at a national facility and we are currently waiting on the green light so that we and you have full access. They should be available in the next week or so...these are now eOPF's.

This month, I would like to highlight the AGR section. CW4 Chris Merrill is our AGR Manager and he is assisted by SFC Eric Richardson, the Human Resources Assistant. These two handle a variety of AGR issues for the MEARNG and MeANG, a total AGR force of about 350 Soldiers and Airmen. They do a tremendous amount of work for an office of two. Please feel free to contact them if you have any AGR questions.

In the recent months, the HRO has been receiving a fair number of Employer Verification Requests. We certainly do not mind answering these requests, however, employees may find MyBiz to be a useful tool in assisting their lending agents. You can actually obtain Employment or Employment and Salary Information in MyBiz. That information can be emailed to your lending agent straight from MyBiz, thus expediting your process. Give it a go!



Get Out The Vote!

The Federal Government has a longstanding policy of granting LIMITED time off from work (i.e., excused absence) to vote. When appropriate, Supervisors may grant excused absence for voting purposes if the polls are not open at least 3 hours before or after the employees SCHEDULED work hours.

Feeling Compressed?

The option of a compressed work schedule has been re-introduced to Technicians. With supervisor approval, Technicians may choose to work a compressed work schedule choosing to EITHER have the first OR second Monday of the pay period off, and working eight(8) 9-hr hour days, and one 8-hr day within the pay period; the 8-hr day, being the Friday opposite the Monday off. Please feel free to contact your supervisor or HRO if you have any questions about the compressed work schedule.

Technician Wellness Initiative

As the new fiscal year begins, the Human Resources Office is proud to announce a new series of wellness training events. Trying to harness the incredible resources that the Maine National Guard offers, the HRO has partnered with MAJ Young to offer resilience classes.

This quarter we will begin the resilience training with MAJ Young. She will be offering the class three different times throughout the quarter to ensure everyone has a chance to attend. If there is a large turnout, we will offer additional days/ times. Our first set of resilience training will cover the following topics:

Overview and Introduction to the Competencies- Enhance resilience and effectiveness by using skills that build the competencies that contribute to resilience
Hunt the Good Stuff- Build optimism by recognizing what is going well and how to increase it.
ATC- Thinking about thinking to recognize how thoughts about an event drive our emotions and reactions.

This class will be offered the following times/ locations:

14 October: 0900-1130 South Classroom, Camp Keyes
04 November: 0900-1130 Classroom, Building 505
09 December: 0900-1130 South Classroom, Camp Keyes

If you missed the first class in October, please make sure to attend either November or December. It was a refreshing break from work, and a great learning experience! These classes are open to all Maine National Guard Technicians, with supervisor approval.

Anyone interested in attending one or both of these classes needs to contact SGT Cara MacVane at 207-430-6019, cara.e.macvane@mail.mil as soon as possible, to ensure a seat. Classes will limit attendees.

Hunting For Healthcare?

Open Season

Need or want to change health insurance plans? What about adding a Federal Dental and/or Vision Plan? Interested in a flexible spending account for qualifying child care or medical expenses? Keep a look out for more information. OPM recently announced that Open Season is Monday, November 10, 2014 through Monday, December 8 2014.



EBIS vs MyBiz...

So... What Are These Two Portals?

EBIS or Employee Benefits Information System is managed by the Army Benefit Center-Civilian. This is where technician employees go to make changes to Health Insurance Benefits, FEGLI or Thrift Savings Plan contribution. Please note, changes to Health Insurance or FEGLI only occur during applicable open seasons or if experiencing a qualifying life event (QLE).



MyBiz is information from the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) which allows a technician to get self-service employment verification (see the last newsletter) and print copies of SF50s. It also displays other data points about employment. Easily find out your next Within Grade Increase (WGI) by showing details on the appointment tab.



Thrift Savings Plan: TSP Loans & Non-Pay Status

TSP loan payments are made through payroll deductions, a period without pay will result in missed payments (unless you make payments directly from your own funds). If you go into approved non-pay status, the Internal Revenue Code allows you to suspend TSP loan payments for up to one year of a non-pay period. **A suspension of loan payments is not automatic.** To suspend your payments, HRO provides the TSP with proper documentation of your non-pay status when notified a technician has an outstanding TSP loan. A special rule applies if you are a civilian entering non-pay status to perform military service. In this case, you will be permitted to suspend payments on your loan until you return to pay status, even if your civilian non-pay status lasts longer than one year. (You cannot repay your civilian TSP loan by having loan payments deducted from your uniformed services pay.)

Got Your Back

Don't be a bystander. Always intervene and help someone out if you see them in a situation that could potentially be bad.

Reducing sexual harassment and assault is one of the military's top priorities. SHARP services are available for all Soldiers. Victims have two options in reporting a sexual assault crime; They can either choose an unrestricted or restricted report.

A restricted report will offer many services available to them, which include ensuring they receive the proper medical, mental health and social services. But choosing an unrestricted report means all of those services plus the support from their command. It also means the assault will be investigated.

For more information please don't hesitate to contact our State Sexual Assault Resource Coordinator CPT Jasmine Cain, 207-430-5824, jasmine.a.cain.mil@mail.mil

There's No Place In The Workplace For Nepotism

So, what do you think??? Is there nepotism in the Maine National Guard?

Per 5 USC, Chapter 31 "A public official may not appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement, in or to a civilian position in the agency in which he is serving or over which he exercises jurisdiction or control any individual who is a relative of the public official. An individual may not be appointed, employed, promoted, or advanced in or to a civilian position in an agency if such appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement has been advocated by a public official, serving in or exercising jurisdiction or control over the agency, who is a relative of the individual."

So, I'll ask you again, what do you think???? Is there nepotism in the Maine National Guard?



NATIONAL GUARD



AGR Notes

After 30 September 2015 AGR Soldiers may only carry over 60 days of accrued leave past 30 September each year. This is a significant change from years past when AGR Soldiers could carry over 75 days. We recommend all AGRs work with the supervisors and develop a leave strategy for FY15 in order to avoid losing leave.

Another exciting development for our retiring MEARNG AGRs is the ability to complete retirement physicals at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard instead of driving to Fort Drum, NY. We will provide more information on an individual basis when AGRs enter the retirement window.

Fraternization

Maine is a small State, our full-time staff is a tight-knit community. Many of you consider those you work with an extended family. There is benefit to our community and a camaraderie that we share, but at all times professionalism needs to be put ahead of everything else. Rank and grade structure is not only a necessity in the workplace, but it is policy.

Favoritism, real or perceived is an issue. All employees should be aware of how their relationships are perceived by others, and how social media can enhance that perception.

Dinner, parties, vacations....employment, promotions, bonus'. Employees need to see how their actions will be seen by others.

Maintain good working relationships, maintain friendships. Remember that both in and out of the workplace employees need to be making professional and ethical decisions.



Please come and visit the Health Benefit Fair

Tuesday

November 18th

0900-1200

Augusta Armory

